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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KINSHASA 001630

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/27/2014

TAGS: [ECON](#) [EMIN](#) [PGOV](#) [KNNP](#) [CG](#)

SUBJECT: REMOVAL OF ARTISANAL MINERS AROUND LIKASI -
INCLUDING SHINKOLOBWE

Classified By: Econoff Peter Newman for reasons 1.5 b/d

11. (U) Summary. The Governor of Katanga is currently on a campaign to move all artisanal miners in and around Likasi to special artisanal mining designated zones outside of Kolwezi. This move includes forcing the 6,000-10,000 miners out of Shinkolobwe. Possible rabble-rousing by former Katangan politicians could exacerbate an unhappy social climate. End Summary.

MOVIN ON OUT, BUT NOT UP

12. (C) The current Governor of Katanga Province, Kisula Ngoy, has issued an order for all artisanal miners in and around Likasi and Lubumbashi to be moved to special artisanal zones, designated by the Minister of Mines, outside of Kolwezi, which is the furthest mining town from Lubumbashi. Econoff spoke with the leader of the Shinkolobwe artisanal miners union who confirmed that the Governor ordered the FARDC (army), ANR (intelligence service) and Mining Police to remove the miners from Shinkolobwe and all other sites in the Likasi/Lubumbashi area. He stated that all the miners - approximately 40,000 to 50,000 - are now in Likasi and Lubumbashi without money or means of employment. The miners also had to abandon the villages they built near the mine sites. (Comment. It is uncertain who is currently guarding and/or working the mines. End Comment.)

13. (SBU) Miners are extremely discontented about moving to the areas outside Kolwezi. They were happy where they were because the cobalt concentration is high and access to consumer goods is better due to the relatively decent condition of the highway from Likasi to Lubumbashi and South to the Zambian border. The continuation of the highway from Likasi to Kolwezi is in extremely poor condition. Transport of goods and people to Kolwezi itself is irregular, much less to areas outside of the main city. Additionally, the miners could sell heterogenite to a variety of buyers in Likasi and Lubumbashi, whereas, in Kolwezi, there are effectively only two buyers: Groupe Forrest and a Lebanese heterogenite dealer who goes by the name Alex Bazano.

14. (SBU) On Aug 25, a large group of miners (over 1000) protested in front of the offices of the Governor of Katanga to protest the Mining Ministry requirement of ID cards for artisanal miners (at a cost of USD 150) and the expanding purchases of Gecamines concessions by George Forrest. The protest was peaceful. However, the miners intend to continue to protest until the governor gives a response to their claims. A financial officer for Groupe Forrest described the artisanal situation as disorder; and there is no one at the provincial level who wants to find a solution to the problem.

POTENTIAL FOR RABBLE ROUSING BY KATANGAN EXTREMISTS

15. (C) Three months ago USAID-Kinshasa met with a Katangan-based NGO which relayed a report stating that an organization named Katanga Force Vive (KFV), in representation of the Katangan community, was fed up with foreign control of the mining sector. In reaction they would occupy all foreign-owned mining concessions, or, at least, resist any efforts to remove artisanal miners from their current locations on parts of foreign-owned concessions. They claimed to intend to target specifically those concessions held under joint-venture between Gecamines and foreign individuals or companies.

16. (C) The NGO transmitted a "map" produced by KFV detailing almost all mining concessions as being foreign-owned and commented that this map was being used to win artisanal miners' support for KFV's political agenda. (Comment. USAID officer noted that the map was crudely drawn and did not clearly delineate which concessions were solely foreign-owned or subject to joint-ventures with Gecamines. Embassy is yet to view the map. End Comment.) USAID mentioned that former Governor Kyungu as well as Moise Katumbi Chapwe (Provincial Director of the PPRD, director of Association pour la Sauvegarde des interets des operateur economique, and brother of Katebe Katoto) were listed as active supporters of the group. A foreign mining firm manager from Katanga confirmed that the miners did threaten to overrun foreign-held concessions. However, up to present, there have been no large scale occupations or violent conflicts between artisanal miners and mining firms.

COMMENT

17. (C) While it was unlikely a few months ago that concession occupations would take place, the enforcement of the Ministry of Mines decision to move the artisanal miners outside of Kolwezi could increase the possibility of local unrest and occupations. As noted above, protests have begun, however, it is uncertain how inclusive and influential these protests are. Katanga has been hit hard during the economic collapse. Comparatively, the standard of living in the copperbelt has dropped further than in other areas of the DRC due to the systematic pillage of Gecamines. The involvement of former Governor Kyungu and Moise Katumbi is not confirmed. However, Kyungu's involvement can only be detrimental to the already frayed social fabric of Katanga.

18. (C) Unfortunately, the miners' union leader commented to Econoff that the provincial authorities are telling miners that Shinkolobwe was ordered closed under strong pressure from the USG. Econoff commented to the labor leader that the GDRC took the decision to create artisanal zones and remove miners from their current concessions of its own accord. He also reiterated to the labor leader that the USG cannot force a sovereign government (GDRC) to do its bidding. It is uncertain whether a general anti-American sentiment is spreading in the lower-classes of Katanga. End Comment.
MEECE